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C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 001584

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [MARR](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KPKO](#) [CG](#) [UG](#)

SUBJECT: LRA UPDATE: KABILA PERSONALLY ENGAGED, URGANDAN
TROOPS IN DRC?

REF: A. (A) KINSHASA 1579 AND PREVIOUS

[1](#)B. (B) KAMPALA 2067

[1](#)C. (C) STATE 177083

Classified By: PolCouns MSanderson, reasons 1.4 b/d.

[1](#)1. (C) During a rancorous seven-hour meeting September 26 of the Supreme Defense Council (chaired by President Kabila and composed of senior government officials responsible for security issues), the normally soft-spoken Kabila uncharacteristically took Army Chief of Staff Kisempia and Air Force Commander Numbi to public task. Minister of Interior Mbemba told PolCouns that Kabila ordered Kisempia to ensure that the LRA elements are promptly disarmed and "neutralized," using any and all measures necessary, including force. Likewise, Kabila demanded to know why the 500 commandos destined for Aba were still in Kinshasa, and asked Kisempia why the First Integrated Brigade had not completed its mobilization for movement to Aba. Kabila ordered Numbi to ensure that the troops from Kinshasa were dispatched the morning of September 27, using whatever means necessary. Numbi told PolCouns September 26 that the troops will fly from Kinshasa to Kisangani September 27. He then envisions moving them on directly to Aba either via FARDC Antonovs (if they are able to land on the grass strip at Aba), or via MONUC helicopter from Aru (which will require multiple trips). Other key members of the Supreme Defense Council, notably including Vice Presidents Ruberwa and Bemba, also reportedly insisted on rapid resolution of the LRA situation through repatriation or at least disarmament.

[1](#)2. (C) MONUC is trying to check reports that some or all of the approximately 3,000 Ugandan troops who had been stationed at the DRC-Uganda border entered the DRC early morning of September 27. The MONUC Kampala office believes this to be the case. MONUC Kinshasa, through the MONUC divisional headquarters at Kisangani, is trying to send a helicopter air mission to confirm or disprove these reports. MONUC has left one DDRRR person in Aba, and one UNHCR person also remained, but the rest of the September 25 mission, including General Padiri, have returned to Aru. (Note: Padiri may be en route to Kisangani, his headquarters. End Note.) There was no progress with the negotiations on September 26, as the LRA leaders in Aba continued to insist that they were awaiting instructions from Kony.

[1](#)3. (C) Presidential Private Secretary Kikaya spoke to PolCouns (septel) before departing on a visit to Zimbabwe, South Africa and Ethiopia to brief these countries on the current situation with the LRA in the DRC. He told PolCouns that President Kabila is ordering his diplomatic advisor (who apparently is still in New York) to prepare a diplomatic note to President Museveni, welcoming Museveni's proposed visit sometime before December -- but not this week.

Comment:

[1](#)4. (C) All indications here are that President Kabila and the two most important Vice Presidents, Bemba and Ruberwa, are seized with the importance of the LRA problem and want to see it resolved. It is also clear from the reports of yesterday's difficult meeting that there is a good deal of frustration with the slow and thus far ineffective response of the Congolese military. The FARDC, hobbled by its long-standing pay, support and general logistics issues, is hard-pressed to react in an effective military fashion to problems under the best of circumstances. Aba, remote and relatively inaccessible, represents a locale far from the best of circumstances. Nonetheless, in this case there is a reasonably consistent message apparently coming from the major centers of power within the GDRC Transition government, a rare circumstance, and thus broad and high-level pressure on the senior FARDC officers to act. Sixth Military District Commander General Padiri played his initial role, but FARDC troops are needed on the ground to move things forward.

[1](#)5. (C) Comment, cont. There is little reliable information out of Aba at this point, and little access other than via Sudan, but we are somewhat skeptical of the reports of an UPDF incursion into the DRC already. Nonetheless, the prospects for UPDF or SPLA or other foreign action directed against the LRA in Aba is an obvious concern and we should remind both of the need for restraint.

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